

# For the Little Folk.

## A YOUTHFUL ROBBER.

BY ALLEN M. SCOTT, A. M.

Many a reader, whose eyes may rest on these lines, and who first saw the "sweet light" in Tennessee or Kentucky, will remember the Rev. John Craig. This gentleman was of the Methodist persuasion, of the original Astbury school, and he, like most others of that denomination at the time to which we allude, was noted alike for his plainness of dress and a strict and open reproval of sin in what form soever it made its appearance, and under any and all circumstances.

Mr. Craig was one of the first preachers to visit the section called Middle Tennessee, now so populous and powerful, but then, (in 1801,) a mere wilderness. He was an itinerant preacher. His circuit extended from Powell's Valley, east of the mountains, to the extreme Western settlements on the Cumberland and Duck rivers. The settlements of the white man were "few and far between"—no public roads had been established—those distant neighborhoods were connected only by faint traces, which were but seldom travelled.

Mr. C. was exposed to many hardships. He lay down on hard beds, slept in open cabins, and shared a man's scanty repast. But he was a man of energy, and his zeal never flagged nor grew weary. He felt the importance of his mission, and urged on by his zeal in his Master's cause, and the good of souls, he waded snows and floods, braved the fury of the winds, surmounted all difficulties, and carried the glad tidings of salvation to the new settlers.

The writer was born in Middle Tennessee, and though a mere child when he last saw Mr. Craig, his image is as fresh in his mind as the events of yesterday.

In 1830, Rev. Mr. C. came, late one evening, to my father's and passed the night at our house. During the evening, after family prayers had been offered up by him, before retiring he gave to my father, in my presence a narrative, which was in substance, the following:—

Many years before, Mr. Craig was passing from East Tennessee to the Duck river country. His way led him along a dim path through a mountain pass, amid craggy rocks, near awful precipices and frightful chasms. Suddenly a young man sprang from a huge rock, and with a heavy rifle presented at Mr. Craig, demanded his money.

Mr. C. regarded the robber with a look of discrimination peculiar to himself, as he reined up his horse and said, "Young man, you never robbed before. What has brought you to this?"

The robber again demanded his money, threatening instant death if the other did not comply.

Mr. Craig answered, "This is your first attempt. You have been better raised! Your mother—"

Instantly the young man dashed down his gun and burst into tears, saying he had indeed been taught better things. And he cried most bitterly.

Mr. Craig tied his horse to a limb, alighted and invited the trembling youth to be seated near him on a flat rock. The young man instantly complied, when Mr. Craig, in a mild and engaging manner, asked him how he had happened to become a robber.

The other told him that he had been raised in Virginia—his parents were in easy circumstances in life, and members of the Presbyterian church—that they had educated him religiously and lavished on him all the affections characteristic of parental love. About eighteen months since, he had married against their will, and with his young and lovely wife, he had made his way into this new and unsettled country. His parents had given him no assistance, and having but little on which to commence life, and falling sick, without money friends or credit, both he and his wife had well nigh starved. In the depths of his distress, he had as a last alternative, resolved to make one robbery, only one, and afterwards live honestly.

Mr. Craig, in the spirit of love, pointed out his error. He told him, that he should have gone to his Heavenly Father, and made known his wants—that his tender mercies are over all His works, and none that trust in Him shall want. The young man was at last—all penitence.

Mr. C. arose, went to his horse, and taking off his saddle-bags, said—"I am too poor, I own no foot of land—no cottage in the wilderness is mine. I have but thirty-one dollars in the world, and reserving one dollar only, in the name of the 'Giver of all good,' I present you with thirty dollars. Take this little sum, as one sent you from Heaven and God and His angels are witnesses that you promise amendment in future life."

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